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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 27 October 1998, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Macedo ..... (Mexico)

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98-81913 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 82: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/53/20, A/53/265, A/C.4/53/L.7)

1. **Mr. Semenenko** (Ukraine) said that, for 40 years, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) had played a major part in helping interested Member States in the practical applications of space technologies and had thereby made a contribution to the efforts of the United Nations to promote international cooperation in that field.

2. His country hoped that the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), which was to be held in Vienna in the following year, would give new impetus to strengthening the capabilities of Member States, in particular the developing countries, in the application of space research for their economic and scientific development. His country had been participating very successfully in a number of international space projects. One of them, which was of special significance for his country was the historic mission of the first Ukrainian spaceman Leonid Kadenyuk as a member of the United States Shuttle Colombia Space Mission in November 1997. The utilization of Ukrainian launch vehicles in a number of international space programmes, 47 of which had been launched, putting 80 space satellites into orbit during the previous seven years, was further evidence of the recognition of his country's scientific and technological achievements.

3. Of special importance among the international space exploration programmes was the "Sea-Launch" project involving Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Norway and the United States of America. It was a very good example of how the scientific and technological potential of different nations could serve the common interest. It was a very promising beginning aimed at commercial purposes only which, in the long run, was capable of bringing many benefits to a large number of countries. Services in that connection would not be offered to countries or organizations that wished to use the project for other than peaceful purposes. The first commercial launch under that project was scheduled for April 1999 when the modified new generation Russian-Ukrainian "Dnipro" booster would put into orbit two British SSTL satellites.

4. The fact that his country had so far signed agreements on cooperation in the field of space research with 23 countries, in particular the Russian Federation, the United States of America, China, Brazil and India, was evidence of its potential for developing international cooperation in that field. All the prerequisites were in place in his country for the establishment of a powerful air-space branch, with the adoption of the required laws and the introduction of the National Space Programme.

5. Scientific and technological progress produced new tasks in the exploration of outer space. In the coming decade more than 1,000 new communication satellites were scheduled to be put into orbit. More and more space vehicles were planned to be launched into space to help countries in resolving their scientific, social and economic problems. That and other objectives could be attained only through the development of close, mutually beneficial cooperation among all the interested Member States. In that connection, his country suggested that COPUOS should strengthen its leading role in promoting and coordinating international cooperation for the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and direct that cooperation to the benefit of all mankind.

6. **Mr. Gonzalez** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the member States of MERCOSUR and associated countries, said that the current session of the Committee was being held on the eve of the convening of UNISPACE III which would meet from 19 to 30 July 1999 in Vienna.

7. It was well known that the Second World Conference on that subject, UNISPACE 82, had taken place under completely different circumstances at a time when antagonism prevailed in relations between countries and when there were even acts of open hostility that were not conducive to mutual understanding. In spite of the fact that the final report of UNISPACE 82 had made a whole series of recommendations, they had not led to any substantial practical results. A new model of international relations had begun to take shape since the end of the cold war, based on the concept of international cooperation, which far transcended the framework of mere coexistence. That approach should underpin the agreements which would undoubtedly be concluded at UNISPACE III.

8. In addition, there was increasing recognition of the necessity of an agreed solution to problems that threatened international security, such as environmental conservation, education, information and mitigating the consequences of natural disasters. Those problems, which were reflected in the agenda of UNISPACE III, could not be resolved without the requisite international cooperation.

9. Thanks to the radical change in the international situation, that new model, given political will on the part of all States, was more likely to be manifested in

international relations. In that connection, he recalled General Assembly resolution 51/122 and also the Punta del Este Declaration adopted by the Third Space Conference of the Americas. Those instruments, in the same way as Agenda 21, had clearly reflected the tendency towards cooperation on the basis of the principle of a just and equitable relationship towards all parties. In that connection space technology could be said to be of the greatest value in resolving such problems.

10. However, it was impossible to account for the fact that space technologies, which were so conducive to the solution of practical problems facing mankind, were not used by those who were responsible for taking political decisions as an inseparable part of their activities to resolve complex humanitarian situations. In other words, there was no connection between technical progress and the utilization of its benefits at the global level. While acknowledging that the principal responsibility in that connection lay with the industrially developed countries, he said, by way of self-criticism that, as the Concepción Declaration, adopted at the preparatory regional conference for UNISPACE III in October 1998 showed, the countries of the region themselves also had work to do in preparing the essential institutional machinery for mutual contacts.

11. All the countries he represented were fully convinced that UNISPACE III would provide a means of determining practical forms of international cooperation taking into account the recent trends in the development of international space law. Moreover, they considered that, in order to provide an effective solution for current problems of a transnational nature, it was essential to adopt an integrated approach in which the ethical dimension was of the greatest importance. One must not regard with indifference the evil being committed in various parts of the world such as the forced displacement of persons and breaches of human rights. In that context, he also recalled the rapacious exploitation of natural resources, primarily by the developed countries, which was damaging to all mankind.

12. From the results of the series of major United Nations conferences held in recent years, it could be concluded on the one hand that there was a need for such joint and coordinated efforts, but on the other that there was a lack of understanding of how important access to knowledge and information about natural resources could be for addressing the problems which those very conferences had been devoted to.

13. The member countries of MERCOSUR reiterated their support for the work of COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies, which must continue seeking solutions to the problems as yet unresolved, and also to new problems. One of the most important issues was the problem of space debris, and a solution to it must be found as soon as possible, given the huge number of satellites which were gradually breaking down and which posed a danger to the Earth's population. In addition, new problems were before COPUOS in the legal field, and were discussed in the latest report of the Legal Subcommittee. In that connection, the establishment of a generally acceptable legal framework taking into account the dynamic development of contemporary international law was a task that the international community should support in every way possible so as to ensure that technology would serve and not impede increased human well-being.

14. Speaking in his capacity as the Vice-Chairman of COPUOS, he expressed his deep concern at the conditions in the Outer Space Affairs Division, which would soon undergo serious changes.

15. Supporting the statement made the previous day by the representative of the United States of America, he noted that it would be extremely unwise to dismiss the important contribution the Division and its Director had made to the preparatory activities for UNISPACE III. Without support from the Secretariat the success of the Conference would be extremely limited. He therefore officially requested the Chairman of the Fourth Committee to bring that matter to the attention of the Secretary-General, and of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, in order to convey to them the Committee's concern that the human resources of the Outer Space Affairs Division should remain unaffected.

16. **The Chairman** said he was sure that the Secretariat would draw attention to the concern raised by the Vice-Chairman of COPUOS, undertook to inform the President of the General Assembly, and said he was sure that the matter would be brought to the attention of the Secretary-General.

Draft resolution A/C.4/53/L.7

17. **Mr. Sinha** (India), speaking on behalf of the Working Group of the Whole on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, drew attention to draft resolution A/C.4/53/L.7 and expressed his appreciation in particular to the Director of the Outer Space Affairs Division and his colleagues for their invaluable assistance. The draft was based on the resolution on that agenda item submitted at the previous session, with the exception of a series of paragraphs having to do with UNISPACE III.

18. A new preambular paragraph reflected the decision taken by the General Assembly at its previous session to convene the Conference. In accordance with the request of the General Assembly, COPUOS and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee would fulfil the roles of Preparatory Committee and Advisory Committee, respectively, for UNISPACE III. On the basis of the work of the Advisory Committee and the Preparatory Committee, a series of recommendations had been made on the preparation of a draft report and provisional rules of procedure for UNISPACE III, and also on the participation of international organizations involved in outer space affairs and the private sector. The results of the Preparatory Committee's discussions and the decisions submitted by it were reflected in paragraphs 21 to 26. Paragraph 23 reflected the results of the preparatory regional conferences.

19. In accordance with established practice, pre-conference consultations would be convened just before the Conference, as mentioned in paragraph 27. Paragraph 28 reflected the request of the General Assembly to UNISPACE III to submit to it at its next session a report on the results of the Conference.

20. The Preparatory and Advisory Committees would complete the preparations for UNISPACE III at their 1999 sessions. Paragraph 18 reflected the agreement that the Advisory Committee should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole to assist it in its work.

21. In order to provide for the convening of UNISPACE III within existing resources, the duration of the work of COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies for 1999 would, exceptionally, be reduced. The decisions concerning the programme of work for the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for 1999 and 2000 were reflected in paragraphs 13 to 15. In view of the reduced timetable of the Subcommittee's work and taking into account the preparations for UNISPACE III, COPUOS had agreed that the agenda of the Subcommittee for the coming year would include consideration of the priority issues listed in paragraph 13. On an exceptional basis, consideration of the other issues listed in paragraph 14 would be postponed by one year and would be resumed in the year 2000. In addition, paragraph 29 listed the items on the agenda of COPUOS whose consideration would be postponed until the year 2000.

22. The Working Group had also discussed the issue of participation of the greatest possible number of developing countries in UNISPACE III. In the view of the Working Group, that issue should be brought to the attention of the Preparatory Committee. The Outer Space Affairs Division, in its capacity as the executive secretariat for UNISPACE III, was requested to study all the possibilities for attracting voluntary contributions and to report on that matter to the Preparatory Committee. The Working Group believed that the matter should be reflected in the report of the Fourth Committee.

23. Issues relating to consideration of the item on space debris by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee were dealt with in paragraph 11. The decision regarding the agenda item dealing with the use of nuclear power sources in outer space was reflected in paragraph 16.

24. COPUOS had drawn attention to the fact that the Legal Subcommittee had begun its consideration of a new agenda item entitled "Review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space", and had recommended that the Subcommittee should establish a working group to consider the item at its next session, as noted in paragraph 4 (c).

25. In conclusion, he proposed that in accordance with established practice draft resolution A/C.4/53/L.7 should be adopted without a vote.

26. **Mr. Sai** (Algeria) noted that the French text of the draft resolution was missing a page.

27. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had taken note of that error and would rectify it. In accordance with the decision taken the day before, rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the Fourth Committee would not be applied. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.4/53/L.7 without a vote.

28. *Draft resolution A/C.4/53/L.7 was adopted without a vote.*

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.